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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
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AT THE 1180th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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On the Russian Federation presidential election

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to brief you on the main results of the Russian Federation presidential election, which took place on 18 March.

According to the Russian Central Election Commission's preliminary results, voter turnout was 67.74 per cent. A total of 99.94 per cent of protocols from the local election commissions have been entered into the *Vybory* State Automated System and the result of their processing so far gives Vladimir Putin 76.69 per cent of the vote. The election result is convincing evidence that our country's citizens support the President's course.

Around 95,000 polling stations were opened around Russia. Present at the election were 474,500 observers from parties, candidates, and civic chambers. There were 105,000 commission members with the right of consultative vote, who were also empowered to act as observers, and 10,500 representatives of the media, including foreign media.

Recent legislative amendments created a most favourable environment for public election observation and substantially broadened observers' possibilities.

We thank all countries that sent their observers to Russia in various formats. We received 1,529 observers from 115 countries and 14 international organizations and foreign parliaments.

The international observers gave a high assessment of the voting, noting the honesty, openness, lawfulness and democratic nature of the election process.

More than 500 foreign observers from more than 80 countries came via parliamentary channels and were invited to Russia by the Russian State Duma and the Federation Council.

Of these, 78 observers represented the national parliaments of 19 countries¹. Representing international organizations, there were 40 observers from the Commonwealth of Independent States Interparliamentary Assembly, 101 observers from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, 5 from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, 9 from the Collective Security Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly, and 26 from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Russia-Belarus Union State. There were also 220 observers, invited by the Russian State Duma, who came in an individual capacity from 61 countries².

The observer mission from the CIS (256 observers) assessed the election as “legitimate, free, open and competitive”. The head of the mission, Viktor Guminsky, said that the election took place in accordance with the electoral legislation in force and met universal standards for the holding of democratic elections. The assessment stressed that the isolated violations recorded were not systemic or large-scale in nature³ and did not affect the overall result.

Rashid Alimov, Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (which sent 25 observers), said that the election was “open and transparent in nature”. The observer missions had everything they needed to monitor effectively the preparation and conduct of the election. Video monitoring of the voting process made it possible for everyone to see this for themselves.

The international observers noted the Russian Central Election Commission’s ongoing planned work to increase use of technological innovations and prevent the advantages of office from being used. Experts have noted that amendments made to Russian electoral legislation have contributed to freer voting. The work of volunteers also earned a high assessment. Observers noted the transparency of candidates’ activity during the campaign period, including the measures taken to ensure a free atmosphere for campaigning, enabling candidates to openly express their views and share with voters their campaign platforms.

In accordance with our obligations under the 1990 CSCE Copenhagen Document, representatives of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly were also invited to take part in the international mission observing the preparation and holding of the election. With 582 observers, the joint ODIHR/OSCE Parliamentary Assembly full-scale mission was the largest international mission at the election. They were given a warm welcome. The mission heads reported constructive co-operation throughout its work. Russia noted the positive assessments, but also some criticism. In this respect, at a meeting with the OSCE observers following the election,

1 Abkhazia, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Cyprus, France, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mongolia, Pakistan, Serbia, South Africa, South Ossetia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

2 Afghanistan, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, United Kingdom, Venezuela.

3 According to Russian Central Election Commission information, voting results from seven polling stations located in the Dagestan Republic and the Moscow, Kemerovo, and Tyumen regions were invalidated due to violations.

the Chairperson of the Russian Central Election Commission, Ella Pamfilova, proposed that the ODIHR Director, Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, and heads of the observer missions share cases of violations during the voting, if such occurred. The OSCE observers' conclusions (in particular regarding the electoral process) and their subsequent recommendations will be given due examination.

At the same time, as we see it, the ODIHR mission's work in Russia once again demonstrated the pressing need to improve the ODIHR's election observation methodology and put together a set of common rules, approved by all participating States, for professional election observation.

In conclusion, we should like to inform you that the Russian Central Election Commission will officially publish the results of the presidential election within three days of its signing of the protocol on the election results. Within ten days of signing, the Central Election Commission will publish in the official press the full details of protocols from all regional polling stations and will also publish this information on its official website.

Thank you for your attention.